

OFS December 2021

Review of Chapter Meeting



Picture of Dina Shabalina our new Northern European Councillor - DOUBLE CLICK THE PHOTO TO SEE A VIDEO

Betsy opened the meeting with prayer focussed on listening to God and finding our peace within Him.

International Elective Chapter

Both Betsy and Kathy took part in the 8 day Chapter in Rome In November. The days were very long with very early starts and late finishes. The conversations were very interesting and the visit was very rewarding.

Over the 8 days they both had many opportunities to meet the other members at the Chapter from various different countries. Listening to some of their stories brought to light the kind of lives they lived and the backgrounds they came from. Such as the challenges of making ends meet in Venezuela due to the currency inflation rates and the difficulty of obtaining medicine in Lebanon, which is expensive and hard to get hold of and the growing conflicts within the Catholic church in Germany.

Following on from this we have been invited by the International Chapter in a special way to pray for the OFS of other countries over the next 3 years, in particular Lebanon & Germany.

Other discoveries were that South Korea's average fraternity number were 500 people which is wonderful but difficult to manage! And in Africa they held their National Election in Madagascar where there was little water and no electricity, and feeding the members took place over an open wood fire!

Listening to all these stories brought to light the huge sacrifices that some of these International Councillors have made for the OFS. They have nothing, and yet put themselves forward, offering their whole lives for their vocation in the OFS.

The elective results saw Dina Shabalina from the Ukraine voted in as International Councillor for Northern Europe, and hopefully will be able to attend our next National Elective Chapter in 2022.

Synodal Process & OFSGB Response

The synodal process has already started as from the 1st Sunday of Advent. This is something that should be happening in all Parishes around the country as it's been ignited by the Holy Spirit through Pope Francis and fed down to the Bishops and clergy to hear the voice of the lay people. Therefore the Council wants to encourage members to join their Parishes to become part of the process in the future of our church.

Kathy introduced the discussion, stressing the importance of the synod as it brings together everything that Pope Francis has been working on since the beginning of his papacy, and now people have a voice to be a part of it for the first time ever, it would be a shame to miss the opportunity.

In the Bible there is a passage in Genesis 12:1 where it says: 'Go from your country and your father's house to the land that I will show you' What does this have to do with the synod?

It means we're encouraged to leave our comfort zones and step into the unknown, trusting Jesus at all times. In other words we sometimes have to leave the place where we are in order to be available somewhere else, available in the right place to make the first step, and be willing to walk with one another and listen to the other person, taking into consideration the voice of hurt, not just from them but also ourselves. This is an attitude of conversion.

Francis had to get off his horse in order to embrace the leper.
Francis needed to allow God to change him.

The leper was on the ground and Francis had to move to meet him where he was before he could embrace him.

We need to meet people where they are and not where we'd like them to be.

Liam representing the North West reported that Liverpool was a good example to follow as having already been through the synodal process it has revitalised the Parish and brought the diocese together. He recommended getting involved, that it was really good and definitely worth it.

Terry reported that his church in Matlock have about 40 parishioners involved, with dignified discussions. The priest there is trying to do more pastoral work, to build apostleships as part of the church's planning.

Thelma is starting a session on the synod in her region of the South West as part of the pastoral fraternity headed by John Power. She is very keen to learn more about the process.

However some regions reported a distinct lack of any sort of promotion regarding the synod and certainly no discussions mentioned in their parishes. Therefore Betsy asked the Chapter if this is something we should bring into our own fraternities? After all didn't God ask St Francis to 'Go and rebuild my church'?

In Gibraltar the bishop there has already approached the Franciscans to take part in the synodal process as a group, because he is very interested in their feedback. This does not mean that they cannot be a part of the parish discussion as well. It could be argued that by introducing it into our fraternities means we could then take what we have learned/discussed into our parishes as well?

Hopefully there will be some useful information on the website soon about it.

Servant Leadership

Betsy suggested "Animation and Guidance" could be a good theme for the next National Chapter Retreat. We need to become co disciples & co missionaries, and exhibiting this in how we govern our fraternities will help us become inspiring

leaders who can listen and give of ourselves for our fraternities. The Chapter Retreat will be some time in June 2022.

More to follow in the next Chapter meetings.

International Statutes

There are in place new provisional international statutes. The statutes are canonically instituted, subject to canon law. These are what guide us in structuring and running our fraternities. They are for a trial of 3 years before they become permanent, and there is discretion for exemptions.

Although the international statutes are changing this does not mean that our national statutes have to change. National statutes are individually tailored to meet the needs of each country and its culture. However, saying this the National Statutes cannot contradict the International Statutes. If this were the case then the national ones would need to be changed to be brought in line with the international ones.

We don't believe this is the case for our National Statutes, so they should not need changing.

Material to use in Initial Formation

The Initial Formation for Candidates should be the formation found on the website of OFSGB. This is the same material that the CIOFS produced. It's ok to add to it as long as the basic material remains the same. There is also a list of additional material supplied by Terry which can also be used. For the list please email or speak to Terry.

Terry reported that as of yet no one has got back to him regarding the zoom meeting for Formators. Initially he was going to travel the country giving presentations to all the regions, and there was supposed to be a zoom meeting to

set an agenda and date and time for the presentations. Betsy suggested re sending the email again.

Formation for Additional Spiritual Assistants

There is a need for extra Spiritual Assistants within the OFS. The CIOFS are aware that we are short since Fr Jesmond left and are planning to send a replacement. However, it may be a good idea to train up potential assistants within the OFS itself as more assistants are needed especially at a local level.

If you think you are called to this then please contact your Regional Minister who will inform Terry.

Accounts

Mike presented the accounts for this quarter. Although there has been some increase in the regional contributions, overall it was down from previous years. This is due to Covid and shrinking fraternities.

Regional Election Dates

Proposed date for Midlands Election 12th or 19th February 2022

Proposed date for North West Elections 19th March 2022

Proposed date for London Elections 5th March 2022

AOB

Angela has requested that the Regionals tell her of any member who has died. She also needs to know of any new Admissions as well.

Next Meeting Dates

The next National Council Meeting will be January 29th 2022.

The next National Chapter Meeting will be February 26th 2022.

Double Click the photos to see a Facebook Video



Picture of the members at the International Chapter - DOUBLE CLICK THE PHOTO TO SEE A VIDEO



Picture of Tibor elected again! - DOUBLE CLICK THE PHOTO TO SEE A VIDEO

